

SOVIET AFFAIRS ANALYSIS SERVICE

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17 July 1959

THE VIENNA WORLD YOUTH FESTIVAL: AN INSTRUMENT OF SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY

Carefully prepared and lavishly financed, the Seventh World Festival of Youth and Students is the first in the series of such festivals to be held outside the Communist world. Its aim is to manipulate the youth of non-Communist countries in the interest of Soviet foreign policy. Particular emphasis will be placed upon influencing the youth of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

According to the latest reports the Seventh World Youth Festival will be attended by "delegates" from 130 countries (Komsomolskaya Pravda, June 21, 1959).^{*} It will also be "the largest and most universal international youth assembly ever to be held" (Molodezh Mira, Youth of the World, 1959, No. 3). The Central Committee of the CPSU, as the real moving force behind this Festival and its organization, hopes that it will mark a new step forward in the world-wide Communist advance. The Soviet regime hopes to facilitate its future actions on the international scene by gaining full or partial support for its foreign policy from the youth of the non-Communist world.

The official preparations for the Festival have been made by a permanent preparatory commission located in Vienna. The commission has been publishing a special newspaper named Festival in connection with its work and its activities have been supplemented by "National Festival Committees" organized in many countries with the assistance of various Communist and "progressive" organizations. As early as December 1958 such National Committees had been organized in 60 different countries (Festival, December 1958). By June 1959 active preparations for the festival were reported to be under way in more than 90 countries. According to official Soviet information (Molodoi Kommunist, Young Communist, 1959, No. 6), more than 1,200 youth, student, cultural, sports and trade union organizations "of various political and religious tendencies" were involved in these preparations.

^{*}The first of this series of youth festivals was held in Prague in 1947. It was attended by representatives of the youth of 71 countries. Delegates from 81 nations attended the second festival held in Budapest in 1949. The third, fourth, fifth and sixth festivals were held in East Berlin, Bucharest, Warsaw, and Moscow, respectively. They took place in 1951, 1953, 1955, and 1957 and were all attended by delegates coming from more than 100 different countries.

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Direct person-to-person contact has been one method of propagating the idea of the Festival among non-Communist youth. Young people from Communist countries have been flooding their "pen-pals" in lands outside the Communist world with letters extolling the Festival.

Preparatory to the Vienna Festival, national youth festivals have already been held in many non-Communist countries, particularly in Asia, Africa and Latin America, as well as in all the Communist nations. These festivals have elected "delegates" to the Vienna Festival and selected the athletic teams and music and dramatic ensembles who will represent their respective lands in the various Festival programs.

The Festival will be attended by about 17,000 persons in an official capacity, but large numbers of "observers" and curious spectators are also expected to be present. Some statistics on the anticipated number and composition of the different "delegations" are already available.

800 leading representatives of Soviet youth - young factory and collective farm workers, students, future scientists, young writers and composers, artists and athletes - will go to the World Festival (Pravda, June 28, 1959).

In fact, a considerably larger number of participants will go to Vienna from the USSR. Besides the youthful delegates many mature scholars and leading figures in the field of fine arts will be present. A number of Communist theorists and specially trained propagandists will deliver lectures and lead discussions at seminars and meetings. Finally there will be a large complement of agents from the state security organizations to keep an eye on both the foreign and the Soviet delegates. M. Gronberg, Secretary of the Austro-Soviet Society, stated in an article in Komsomolskaya Pravda on June 24, 1959 that more than 1,000 persons would come to the Festival from the Soviet Union.

Communist China, in its effort to compete with Moscow for influence, will probably be almost as fully represented at the festival as the USSR. Large delegations will come from the satellite countries of Eastern Europe — about 550 each from Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary and 450 from Bulgaria. The Latin-American countries will send 300 "delegates" from Brazil, 250 from Argentina, and 150 from Venezuela, to name only the largest contingents from that part of the world. The United States will have 400 "delegates" and Denmark 300. France, the home of a large and influential Communist Party, will send 800.

The Party Central Committee of the USSR, in view of the great significance it attaches to the Seventh World Youth Festival, will obviously attempt to take advantage of the presence of West German young people in Vienna to promote its policies towards Germany in general and Berlin in particular. The Permanent Commission expects the arrival of a large contingent of West German and Austrian youth. The Jugendring groups, the Catholic Youth Organizations of both countries and the Union of Austrian high schools have refused categorically to take part in the Festival, but some individual branches and chapters are sending delegates to Vienna. From Western Germany the Union of Liberal Students and the Socialist Student Organization are sending to the Festival 25 delegates each and the Social Democratic Young Sokols will be represented at Vienna by observers. Festival in February 1959 stated that more than 1,000 representatives of youth in the German Federal Republic had announced their intention to participate and its April issue carried a statement to the effect that not fewer than 15,000 to 20,000 youths from West Germany would be present. The June 1959 issue of the journal Molodoi Kommunist notes that "in Bonn it is understood that thousands of young West Germans will go to Vienna without hindrance."

Molodoi Kommunist has this to say about the participation of Austrian youth in the Festival:

For the most part the young people have expressed the desire to participate personally in this Festival. But since the leadership of their respective organization is opposing it, they will take part in the Festival on an individual basis and not as members or activists of this or that organization.
(Molodoi Kommunist, 1959, No.9).

Exact information on the participation of Asian or African youth is not available, but it can be assumed that attendance from both these continents will be large.

Besides the regular delegates, by May 1959 more than 1,500 athletes from different groups in various countries had announced their intention to attend the Festival (Festival, May 1959).

The Festival's program is extraordinarily extensive and varied. An average of 80 different events is anticipated for each day of the Festival. The events planned may be grouped under five main headings, each with a special goal of its own, while the program as a whole has one basic political aim; namely to win over the youth of the non-Communist world.

1. Entertainment. An elaborate entertainment program has been arranged, It is hoped that the spectacular character of this program will exert sufficient psychological influence upon the young people present to make them easily susceptible to the "message" of other aspects of the Festival. On the opening day the entertainment will include a great parade on the Prater Boulevard, a parade of dance and gymnastic groups and finally a great fireworks display and a "youth ball" for all participants. Later there will be an international student ball, an international student carnival, another great celebration on the Prater, an assembly of girls awarded beauty prizes during 1959, two large style shows, a celebration of "youth and friendship" with a parade and closing concert by famous performers, "festivals" of farm youth and circus performers, dances and concerts in the international student club and a brilliant last evening of entertainment with a "gala" concert, fireworks and so on.

2. Sports. The program of sports events is designed to appeal to the athletic and sports interests of youth. The friendly atmosphere and spirit of sportsmanlike competition which the sports program should generate will help the Soviets in their campaign to influence youth. The schedule includes competitions for the Festival's sports medal, "friendly" meetings of young athletes from various countries to discuss sports, an international tournament of young stars, international automobile races and a conference of coaches and directors of sports organizations.

3. Festival of the Arts. A program of colorful and varied professional and amateur performances representing the arts of many different national groups has been arranged. By playing upon the emotion and enthusiasm of youthful audiences these artists are expected to make Communism seem an attractive way of life. Ensembles and soloists from more than 70 countries have already announced their intention to take part in the Festival.

4. Intellectual. This part of the Festival program aims to evoke in youth respect for the accomplishments of the Communist countries and particularly the Soviet Union in science and engineering and to demonstrate their superiority to the West in these fields. Lectures will be given by outstanding scholars and scientists on such themes as "problems of mastering space" (to be combined with a meeting between youth and selected Soviet "creators of the first interplanetary rocket"), "the lengthening of human life", "atomic power today and tomorrow", "a century of science and man", and "problems of contemporary literature."

5. Political. The program for this section of the Festival has obviously been prepared with a view to furthering the political aims of the Soviet regime. The core of the program will be a series of student seminars on critical political problems. The topics will include "the role of students and student organizations in contemporary society", "nature and man in the light of contemporary concepts

of science, technology and philosophy", "problems of the democratization and reform of systems of higher education", "economic, political and cultural problems of colonial and under-developed countries and the role of students in their solution." It is a foregone conclusion that the papers on these subjects will be written carefully by representatives of the Communist world and the discussions will be directed by trained propagandists and theoreticians specially selected for the purpose. There will also be conferences on such subjects as "automation and its results in various countries" and "questions of wages and employment", as well as meetings to celebrate "friendship and solidarity with youth in colonial countries and countries which have only recently become independent."

Gatherings of young people organized on a professional basis are also scheduled, including gatherings of construction and metal workers, electric power and engineering workers, oil and railway workers, workers in foodstuffs industries, textile workers, workers in chemical industries, clothing and footwear workers, miners, printers, agricultural laborers, members of agricultural artels (producers' co-operatives), and collective farmers, private peasants, independent and tenant farmers, young white collar workers, teachers, journalists and so forth.

The first four headings of the Festival program contain events designed to exert a psychological impact on youth, while the winning over of youth to the support of Soviet policies is to be attained by the fifth heading in the program. Influencing the young people is, of course, only the necessary precondition to the essential goal of capturing their support for Soviet world policy.

The formal program will be supplemented by other types of activity. An important method of spreading propaganda among the young people will be the individual contacts made at various informal gatherings and discussions. Even the inevitable flirtations may have a part to play in this process.

The Communist organizers of the Festival expect opposition to it, particularly from Western youth organizations. They are therefore making every effort to compromise anti-Communist activity by such organizations. The Soviet press has even accused certain Austrian political parties of obstructing the Festival:

Officially members of these parties voted to adopt resolutions permitting the Festival to be held in Vienna. However, in their partisan political activity outside the government, they have not considered themselves bound by their own vote and are carrying on both openly and in secret a campaign against the Festival. (Molodoi Kommunist, 1959, No. 6).

The article also stated that West Germany is the headquarters of European opposition to the Festival and that this opposition is headed by Catholic groups.

The Soviet press , Festival , and the publications of the World Federation of Democratic Youth are issuing numerous articles and press releases in an attempt to offset the impact of negative reactions to the Festival by the free youth of the West. They cite resolutions approving the Festival adopted by youth organizations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America and messages of greeting from various "progressives" in the field of politics, science, culture and art. The official management of the Vienna Festival is trying to use these artificially inspired statements as proof that the Festival is a completely non-political affair, organized by and representing youth of the most varied political, ideological and religious beliefs, which has no other aim than to lessen world tension and clear the ground for international friendship and solidarity.

Participation in these international games and competitions does not in any way imply adherence to or approval of any one political trend (Festival , February 1959, No. 5).

These young people are not gathering to discuss which is the best political faith, nor to defend or attack any particular existing government. They are gathering in order to dance together, enjoy themselves together, take part in sports together, show each other their different national cultures, and to talk over together the things which they all value. They will talk of such questions, equally understandable to all, as for instance, the simple question of what lies ahead for them—— a long, peaceful life or a quick death. (Festival, February 1959, No. 5).

Despite all attempts to prove that youth itself has organized this Festival, the precise and skilful stage-management of its real directors cannot be hidden. The World Federation of Democratic Youth has been placed in charge of its preparation and conduct. This organization is under the direct supervision of the Central Committee of the CPSU and together with the World Peace Council, the World Federation of Trade Unions, and the International Democratic Womens' Organization it belongs to the group of subsidiary organizations of the CPSU Central Committee created after World War II. Organized at a conference in London in 1945, by 1949 it had been completely taken over by the Communist Party. This absorption is confirmed by the expulsion from France in 1951 of the Executive Committee of the World Federation previously located in Paris, for subversive activity. The Executive Committee then moved behind the Iron Curtain to Budapest.

A declaration made by the Executive Committee of the World Federation of Democratic Youth at the December 1958 conference in Colombo shows quite clearly that this organization is directed from Moscow. Ostensibly this declaration was made on behalf of 85,000,000 young people from all over the world. But it merely parroted the current "line" of Soviet foreign policy, besides recommending careful preparations for the Festival. The lines linking these preparations to Moscow are exposed to view in an article entitled "A Great Force of the Present Age" which was written to observe the tenth anniversary of the founding of the "World Movement of Fighters for Peace." (Molodoi Kommunist, 1959, No. 5) The article describes youth festivals as one of the best possible means of promoting Soviet "peace" aims.

The Soviet press, Festival, and the publications of the World Federation of Democratic Youth provide ample proof that the Festival is purely a political project. Komsomolskaya Pravda (June 23, 1959) removes all doubt about the Festival's political and propaganda aims with such remarks as "Venezuela welcomes the Festival which will help her in the day-by-day struggle for complete liberation from the imperialist camp." An article in Festival (February, 1959) indicates the important part Communists are expected to play in the Festival itself:

As no one has ever denied young Communists will also participate in our festival. Perhaps in 1859 it was still possible to have an all-embracing world meeting without Communists, but today we live in the world of the year 1959, in which one part of the world is already Communist, while in the other part the Communists are an important force. A great world undertaking in science, sports or any other field is impossible today without Communist participation.

The financing of the Festival has been carefully planned and apparently no expense will be spared to make it a success. For example, the Festival Commission has budgetted \$ 884,000 just for the upkeep of the Festival participants during their stay in Vienna, at the rate of \$52.00 per person. If the expenses for the program itself, for publicity and propaganda, for decorating the city and for travel costs of the participants are added up, the total figures are large indeed. It has been officially announced that funds collected by the National Preparatory Committees and contributed to the Festival Fund amounted to \$250,000, which sum was earmarked for the travel expenses of participants. However, Festival (April and May 1959) notes that other funds for the Festival have been provided by the World Federation of Democratic Youth, the International Student Union and various "individuals" and "countries which have at their disposal the corresponding resources." This last modest phrase means of course the Soviet Union, which undoubtedly is contributing the lion's share of the necessary subsidy either directly to the Festival Fund or through the World Federation of Democratic Youth and the various Communist Party treasuries of the world to the individual national preparatory committees.

Real Purposes of the Festival

The objectives of the Festival in the eyes of the CPSU Central Committee are easily apparent in the literature prepared for the guidance of its organizers: These purposes are as follows:

1. To control the minds of the youth of the world in order through youth to promote Soviet foreign policy. To mold youth from many lands into a mobile force directed from the Kremlin to further Soviet political aims.
2. To impose upon the youth of Asia and Africa political submission to the CPSU Central Committee. The influence exerted by the Soviet Union on the youth of these continents is already substantial and the Festival is intended to make that influence decisive.
3. To stimulate the struggle of the peoples of Asia and Africa against the West's policy by artificially arousing "the determination of the youth of Asia and Africa to put an end during the lifetime of our own generation to colonial survivals in the two continents." (Molodoi Kommunist, 1959, No. 5)
4. To gain the assistance of youth in the campaign to take over politically and economically the Latin American countries. Every effort will be devoted to destroying the influence of the U.S.A. in Latin America. Preparations for the Festival in the South American countries——Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela and the rest——indicate the extent to which Soviet policy has been brought to bear on the youth of those countries.

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5. To win the support or at least the neutrality of the youth of the free West. The possibility of achieving this aim may be increased by the fact that the Seventh World Youth Festival is being held in a free Western country, but is also protected from possible anti-Communist retaliatory moves by Austrian neutrality in the cold war.

It should be noted that the CPSU Central Committee hopes that Soviet youth will win the warm debate expected at the Festival with the representatives of the youth of the non-Communist world. Appealing to Senator Humphrey in Komsomolskaya Pravda, (June 28, 1959), the Communist leadership asserts:

The young hearts of the Festival participants go out in friendship to all their friends throughout the world. At Vienna, the sound of music and song in many different languages soaring above the Alps, may persuade youth to forget your exhortations and to carry home with them impressions which you would not like them to have received.

6. To attempt at the Festival to win over politically the greatest possible number of West German youth and thus to exert an influence upon the policy of the Federal Republic in the German and Berlin questions. It is worthy of note that the Soviet leadership skillfully inspired the "appeal" of 39 public and scientific figures of the Federal Republic to West German youth to support and take part in the Vienna Festival.

It is interesting that the Soviet press is almost completely silent regarding preparations for the Festival in Communist China. Evidently there will be serious competition in Vienna between the two Communist world centers for influence over the youth of the non-Communist world and particularly of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

To sum up, the Seventh World Youth Festival will be the largest and most universal youth assembly ever to be held. Holding it outside the Communist empire is an attempt to introduce a Trojan Horse into the free world.

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